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IORNR:

Allow one person at least to speak on behalf of the best rock and roll movie of the century. I am, of course, referring to *Napoleon*. It's spirit of adventuresome daring (and new commercial acceptance) was a whole bunch like listening to Adam and the Ants. The fashion of the movie was incredible, as M. Bonaparte had hair cut like Geddy Lee and clothes that make th J. Priesties look like second graders. The characters in it ranged from a dude so *bad*, he had a live snake on his shoulder (50 years before Alice Cooper) to a *vixen* so becoming she had her tits falling out of her dance costume. Themes of many parts of the music score were far from classical stereotypes. Dissonant chords, off beat rhythms and truly inspiring melodies were pieced together, in that, attempting a description to tie it in with the *fantastic visuals*, one could only mutter under their breath 'Rock & Roll'. I say it this way 'cause the audience was full of preppy-type folks getting smashed on the bars they had up there (Theater for the Performing Arts). I felt like I was the only one stoned. (At intermission).

The true meaning of this film has yet to be seen. Young people of America were in a parallel of the French Revolution and are still on a crash course with a new destiny. This prophecy is apparent in the eyes of the actor (Albert Dieudonne) of Napoleon. In his 'look' he conveys the ageless feel of hearts looking for a new age of peace. This look naturally contains the anguish of James Dean, the soul of John Lennon, the vision of Bowie or Eno, the integrity of Shakespeare or Marley. I would hope that when this flick is further commercialized, all the punks who think they're into rock and roll can widen their perceptions enough to embrace the true spirit of this lifestyle, which is aptly described in the film. It has a lot to do with aspiration and the modern music (esp. RADIO AMERIKA) of

today reflects little hope in this area. But with times heading for a change and pieces of history coming together in such amazing ways as this movie, there's to be no doubt that wishy-washy closed minded conservative preppy kids have no future, not even in the money games of their biggest pretensions. Myself, I will sit back to watch the revolution get underway and then converse with those who died to see where I fit in in the new empire. Any reader with ears to hear what I'm saying can relate.

The rest of y'all can ignore this and buy the new *Journey/Foreigner* album.

Peace and Love,

—S.A. Dutch

What?

IORNR,

I want to congratulate S.A.'s Jebree! (come back and save the airwaves) for voicing what I thought was the most self-explaining statement about the "new" (cough!) KISS. It's too sad that they rely on bubble gum programming (listening, Tim?). Yeah, you gotta admit they play a good tune every other hour. But c'mon! Give my ears a break. The older days had better ways, (right Joe?). I'm glad I invested in a cassette player so I could hear some real jams.

Rockin-n-Rollin'

—James Baumgart

Dear David:

Glad to hear you're welcoming comments on your top 45 list. I listened to your program, and I must say I'm VERY glad that you decided to play them in chronological order. This way, I didn't have to listen to any of the 'songs' made from 1963 on.

COMMENTS: I really liked your selection of the picture of Bill & The Comets (don't laugh now — it's the first page I turned to when I opened up the mag). But #45 for R.A.T.C.????

I DID like your idea of selecting only one song per singer/group. This welcomed quite a bit more variety of talent. I don't know anything about AC/DC, Cars, etc. to say they do not belong on an all time top list (see — I'm being honest here!!) but there's one group I wouldn't put on ANYONE's 'top 45, 100, 1000, or 100,000' list, and that group is none other than the Beatles. Ranking the Beatles above Bill — AGH!

It's nice to see a decent song at #1. I'm a bit curious to know why you selected "Sweet Little Sixteen" (a good song — don't get me wrong!) instead of "Johnny B. Goode" or "Maybelline".

To close — a request for a song on the Back Beat Show. Could you flip over one of your Essex (or Decca) 45s and play something nice, rare, and something that could only be heard on the backbeat show?

Sincerely,

—Denise

P.S.: When you mentioned that KTSA had a 'top' 55 rock hits of all time show, that was news to me. That's what a memorable event it

must have been — no one else I know knew of it either. I guess it was as bad as the "Roots of Rock & Roll" on TV. With that one, a good idea would be to watch he picture and turn down the volume on the set. The old clippings are nice, but the guy who wrote the history of rock & roll for them ought to go back to school.

Dear Ron:

Why is it that a rock superstar like Neil Sedaka is masquerading around town calling himself "Claude Morgan & The Blast"??

I like his new style, it has a solid beat, and is easy to dance to, but I yearn to hear the old standard's like "Calendar Girl". Has he dyed his hair or something??

Anyway, I just thought it was a curious change in styles and this charade;? why doesn't he use his real name. He could make a lot more money that way.

Maybe he could learn some of my old songs.

—Sunny Ozuna

Alright, Claude, we know it's you?

A brief commercial interruption. First, thanx for the letters. Mr. Spencer, the count is 2 to 1 against, with about fifty letters in. Now, we all know that the majority of people don't like the "new" KISS, so here's a challenge. Give us an hour or two every Sunday afternoon to program the kind of music S.A. should hear. We won't even play stuff that's radical — only bands that should be played on a commercial radio station — Crack The Sky, Icehouse, Split Enz, etc. How about?

New Feature Dept.: We've instigated a record rating system. It's the star system, 1 to 5 stars, with really rancid Lps getting frisbees. The exact explanation of each level can doubtlessly be found in the Vinyl Habits section, but the occasion gives me a chance to explain something about reviewing Lps. You see, there's a difference between what I, as a typical schmuck like, and what I, as a critic, like. My critic side likes the same stuff but... For example the Rush's Moving Pictures gets only 4 stars even though it's my emotional favorite of the year. I've already rated other albums higher than that.

And the difficulty in giving anything 5 stars is great. See, an Lp that is rated that high has to transcend it's genre, have not a wasted song on it, consist of some of the best work the band in question has done and make a coherent Lp. Oh, we don't get no respect... Oh, and how about some letters on things other than KISS? You're in the habit now — give you opinion on anything here within.—DDA



Publisher
Ron Young

Editor
David Arthur

Local Scene Editor
Jim E. Beal, Jr.

Contributing Writers
Wendy Carson
Robbin Cresswell
Cliff Dunn
David Frost
Clyde Kimsey
Don Moore
Tim Lawless
Vicki Ray
Jeff Webb

Chief Photographers
Robbin Cresswell
Clyde Kimsey

Contributing Photographers
David Willis
Carolyn Woolfork

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It's Only Rock'n'Roll

Vol. 4

No. 5

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Cover photo by Clyde Kimsey

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A swing in the right direction

by
VICKI RAY and
WENDY CARSON

Fans who feared that this band had veered too far off the Utopian road can put their fears to rest: Utopia's new material, previewed during their summer tour, heralds a return to the socio-political commentary and progressive pop that are the hallmarks of their earlier LP's. "Swing to the Right," (the title tune of the LP set for late September release), is a hyperbolic anthem for the growing ranks of rightwingers; Utopia is back to their old use of savage wit and satire, backed up by inventive playing, calling attention to a grim situation, and hopefully motivating some change.

During a recent Houston gig, *JORN* discussed the political thrust of the LP with Utopian drummer John "Willie" Wilcox:

"It happens to be a current statement that coincided with the music we were doing. I don't know if, as a band, we'd continue that political idea in the future — it just reflects things that are happening now politically."

This tour had originally been publicized as being highly political/satirical, with all of the members dressing in camouflage uniforms. Asked why that aspect of the concept was no longer intact, Willie replied, "It represented the political side of the statement we

valuable to set aside like that."

Willie's reputation of boisterous good humor belies the serious, determined, soft-spoken attitude evidenced in this interview. He continued, on the subject of touring: "More touring would get us a larger following, but we're not 18 years old and just formed a band, and never been anywhere. We've been traveling for years now and have been all over the world. I personally wouldn't mind doing an extensive tour if we had support, but we all have other projects that we do, and to make the band a 200-day-a-year touring band, it would have to be pretty successful."

Some of Willie's non-Utopian projects include songwriting with singer David Lasley (they wrote a song called "Got to Find Love" for the current Pointer Sisters' LP), and boxing. "I have a trainer in Miami, Jerry White — he was a famous fighter in the late 30's, and he trained Muhammed Ali. I've been boxing at Dundee's 5th Street Gym, and probably by late this year, I'll be having some fights! I'm not a violent person; it's all for sport."

Willie does a good amount of songwriting for the band, as do all of the members. "We just collectively bring in ideas. Say, I'll come in and I'll have a part, and Roger will have a part, and we'll put 'em together. Todd



Willie Wilcox: Well, my broker's E.F. Hutton.

Willie and I always try to get the real tasty jazz-player's kind of exquisite playing on the albums. Sometimes that doesn't work with rock'n'roll sensibility, but it just so happened that the concept for this album *Swing to the Right* . . .

Willie: . . . was a swingin' thing.

Roger: Yeah, it was kind of a *swingin' thang*. So we were able to sneak in a few licks here and there. Maybe we'll get more in the next time.

They wouldn't admit that jazz is a trend that they will follow in the future, however. Willie: It seems this band doesn't follow any trend! Hopefully, the trend I'd like to see the band follow is writing better and better tunes, trying to reflect what's going on personally, or around the world, doing as much good playing as possible, and putting on good shows for the people.

Asked about jazz artists they enjoy, Roger replied, "It's hard to say now because a lot of the people who were playing what we considered to be real jazz are now playing fusion music, or MOR jazz."

Willie: We still enjoy the classic people like Oscar Peterson . . .

Roger: . . . McCoy Tyner — the purists — all the people who haven't "sold out."

Has Utopia sold out? Roger laughed and responded, "Well, if we did, we didn't get a very good price!" Then added seriously, "No, I don't think so at all."

Willie: If we'd sold out, we wouldn't be sitting here.

Roger: I had ambitions of playing jazz, or even before that, playing classical music, but you can't really make a living at it — unless you cross over, like say, a George Benson. There's someone who, I will say, "I think he's sold out." I don't really like his new records as well as his old ones when he was a real player.

Willie: You can't blame him . . .

Roger: . . . Yeah, how long is the guy going to keep flailing away, playing the tiniest clubs, with maybe 20 people coming to see him?

Willie: In a few years, he'll be able to retire and play little clubs the rest of his life . . .

Roger: . . . He can go back to it. There's always people who will listen to real jazz; it's just that the audience is much smaller.

Commenting on the fact that Utopia themselves played smaller clubs this tour, Roger said, "The audiences are always real good. It's unfortunate that some of the physical places we play are not really conducive to getting a good sound. We play both for the excitement of playing in front of people, and also for our own satisfaction, and if it's too loud, or there's something preventing you from getting communication going . . . in a tiny, little club, where it's real loud, and real hot, you just have to kind of give in to it and say, 'Well, this is not Carnegie Hall and this is not a Broadway musical!' The crowds are always great — they always pull you through everything, even if you can't hear yourself, or whatever. The crowd seems to be digging it and that's what really matters."

Summing up Utopia's immediate future, Willie left us with this bright portent: "In the hopes that the new record deal will be there, our tunes are hung on the chimney with care . . . We're excited — we've always maintained our excitement and our devotion to the band as individual members. We've been together a pretty long time for a band now, and we want it to work — we just need some excitement generated by someone else besides ourselves. It's a big transition period for us. I think there's a lot of big things to come. Nothing's fully developed, but you'll be hearing from us!"—RNR



Utopia: Rundgren sans guitar.

were making with the music. Then camouflage became fashionable, and we didn't want to seem like we had the 'Jordache' look, so we played it down. The label that we're with doesn't really back the things we're doing so it's difficult for us to put on anything with complete depth and full-scale, other than dressing to some political image and playing."

The members of Utopia are known for their willingness to chronicle their difficulties with their record company at the drop of a hat, and conversations with Wilcox, and later, with synthesist/keyboardist Roger Powell, bore this out. However, Willie indicated that these difficulties may soon be resolved with the advent of a new record contract. Although negotiations were still too unsettled for details, Willie did say that they expect the sort of support they deserve from a new label. "It's hard to pin it and say whose fault it is, but history has repeated itself. We've certainly had a lot of good material over the years, a lot that should have done something. There's no use in continuing to blame the record company; when you don't get along with someone, you just move on. We're not going to sign with anyone with the intention of having the same thing happen; we've been at it too long, we work too hard, and we feel our music is too

(Rundgren) writes most of the lyrics."

At this point, Roger Powell popped in, and Willie seized the opportunity to take over interviewing chores.

Willie: What do you do in your spare time? We heard you really are a motorcycle enthusiast.

Roger: I've owned several motorcycles; the most recent one is a Suzuki 750, and I've been trying to get the drummer in the band to get a motorcycle and go riding up in New England!

Willie: Tell us about your studio in your home.

Roger: I have an electronic music studio in my home which is near Woodstock, and I've been working on some projects, but it's just like anybody else — trying to get a record deal is tough. I want to get around that: I think I might put out an EP and distribute it through *Keyboard Magazine*, or the other inside magazines.

Willie: They were saying earlier how our new album has more hints of jazz into it. I'd been brought up playing jazz. Roger and I especially enjoy the playing aspects of jazz, the harmonic, chordal things. The new LP definitely has more of that influence.

Roger: Willie and I are the "jazzers." Every time we make an album, we always talk about what direction it's going to go in.

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They want the air waves

The Ramones

by
CLYDE KIMSEY
Contributing Writer

Whether the mass rock audience cares to admit it, The Ramones are one of the most important rock groups in the last ten years. Even though they themselves never thought of their group as a punk band, The Ramones along with The Sex Pistols unleashed the second resurgence of original rock'n'roll way back in 1976.

The group started in the summer of '75 with Joey; vocals, Dee Dee; bass, Johnny; guitar, and Tommy; drums—whose place Marky took in '78. The Ramones' fondest musical memories had been the basic and simplistic fun songs that were much a part of rock in the mid-sixties. They liked the light and happy songs of the Beach Boys as well as the raw sounding garage bands of that era. In '75 the four bored youths decided to form their own band as an alternative to the mundane progressive rock of the period (actually 1981's airwaves aren't much better). The Ramones knew their music was very radical and they expected controversy from the start. What fun is ordinary rock'n'roll anyway? It sounds like a contradiction of terms. Most of today's rock fans are as conservative as parents of the fifties. The Ramones expected an uphill climb but I'm sure they didn't expect to still be on the verge of making it after six (seven) if you count the *Rock'n'Roll High School* soundtrack albums.

Except for mixed reviews on their newest albums *Pleasant Dreams* and *End Of The Century*, the critics have hailed them as the saviors of rock'n'roll since '76. Commercially each Ramone album has sold approximately 200,000 copies. Enough to keep up their contract and sell out small to medium-sized concert halls but not much more. They're still hanging in there trying to get to the heart of the rock record buyers. They want the mainstream rock audience without selling out completely. The Ramones feel they are one of the few bands from that punk fountainhead of the summer of '76 that has managed to retain their integrity. Most of the other bands from that era have either disbanded or have new albums out that are like night and day compared to their debuts. The Ramones feel their music still has that basic and distinctive "Ramones sound" to it, but the music has simply evolved.

Talking with their lead singer Joey before the show I mentioned that looking back to their third Lp, *Rocket To Russia*, it seemed to end the band's first chapter. Joey disagreed saying that each one has changed just as the one preceding it and there was no deliberate plan to broaden their sound thereafter—it "just happens" after being around for so long. After a few more questions we parted so the concert could get underway, after all there are people who come to concerts for more than interviews.

For those of you who don't remember, this is the fourth time The Ramones have played Randy's. Their first show was at the end of '77 with about 80 people in attendance. Back then I had only heard them on the KISS radio commercials. I didn't quite know what to expect as my friends and I sat within ten feet of the stage. On that particular night, The Ramones were far too loud and we weren't accustomed to their raw sound. I've been to concerts since '68 but the constant fluttering of my eardrums told me this was the loudest and consequently the most unbearable concert ever. We left early but I was still curious about their sound. I had never heard anything like it. I began listening to their albums

and soon almost felt the same way as when I received the first Monkees album, (which was also my first as well) back in '66. My suggestion is to listen to The Ramones' records before seeing them live in order to appreciate them.

Last month's concert made it my sixth Ramones concert and my third interview with them. Their albums have changed but their concert appearances have only differed slightly.

A Ramones concert is like putting all sorts of things in a blender. They will play songs as different as "Cretin Hop" and "Questioningly" and it will all come out sounding the same at most shows. I've only been able to get really excited at their shows twice. Nowadays they aren't any louder than other bands but the actual sound of the band live isn't much different than in '77 or '78. They fail to pace themselves as they play 25-30 songs almost non-stop, so much like a medley that it's hard to tell when one song ends and another begins. I have to listen closely to the words to tell. I say to myself, "The last verse had cretin in it and this one has chainsaw, so it must be a different song."

tonio Ramones show. Maybe, just maybe, the public is ready to give them that gold record, especially since *Pleasant Dreams* is currently selling quite briskly, thank you.

Because of their seemingly sudden S.A. popularity I decided to talk to Joey again after the show. I asked him how it felt still just being on the brink of making it after six albums.

"It feels great. We have the most loyal and dedicated fans of any band and we have our integrity. We've stuck to our guns, unlike most bands who take it easy. Our audience has broadened, reaching a younger crowd all the way to (older) hard rock fans."

How did you feel about your favorite late-seventies bands going mainstream?

"Some people need money more than others," was his reply.

We got to the subject of producers and I wondered what made them decide to get Graham Gouldman to produce their new album.

"He was our manager's suggestion and we liked his 10 CC productions. Graham is responsible for writing and arranging some of the sixties' best songs by the Yardbirds, The Hollies, Herman's Hermits, and others

sound. Our sound is us. The album is very diversified. There's about five different styles of music on it, though it's still a very straightforward rock'n'roll album. Probably the most different songs are "All Quiet on the Eastern Front", "We Want the Airwaves", and "It's Not My Place".

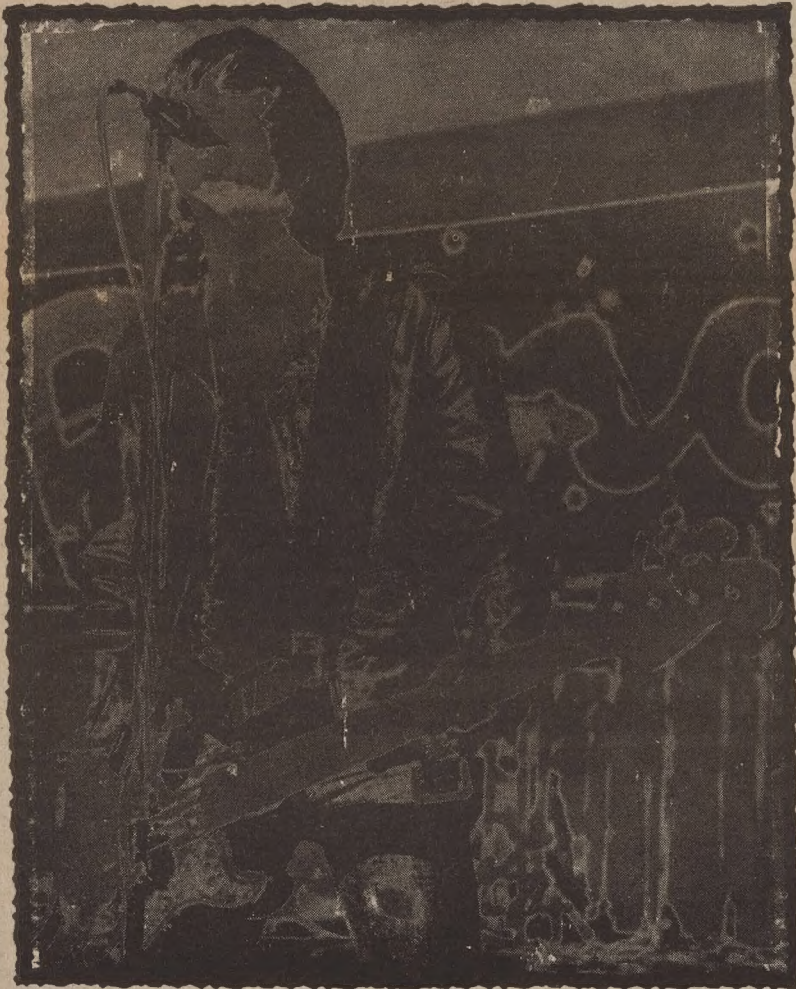
Listening to the song "Rock'n'Roll Radio" from *Century* and "We Want the Airwaves" I wondered what The Ramones felt about current radio.

"There doesn't seem to be any traditional rock'n'roll left on the radio except maybe the resurgence of The Doors. Trade rock'n'roll is still being made by a handful of people who won't give up. Everybody's got their pride—well, too many people don't actually. That's why there are bands like R.E.O. Speedwagon and Foreigner. The way radio is these days is that everything has to fit into a mold and has to follow a formula. And everything that follows has to sound like everything before." (Don't be disgruntled S.A. radio fans—you're not alone).

"If there's any originality or uniqueness in the sound, the radio industry thinks it's dangerous or something. They don't want people to think. They want to brainwash everybody into buying the same sound. When people think, then it's dangerous to the future of AOR and the radio's line of reasoning. I grew up on radio in the sixties and it was great. It was fresh and exciting. You could hear The Beatles one minute and The Trashmen (the band who originally did "Surfin' Bird"—C.K.) the next. They used to play anything and everything, but nowadays it's ratings and money and corporate bullshit. Everything is politics. Even now, the thing is to sound like Tom Petty or Springsteen. How do they think rock'n'roll went downhill?

"It wasn't until the late sixties that the radio industry figured out rock and started categorizing it. Until then there weren't any ratings. Rock then formularized itself to meet radio standards. Less and less original music was getting airplay. It was all becoming massive bullshit with 45-minute guitar solos. Maybe LSD had something to do with it." Joey then paused for a breather.

I commented that the hippies sabotaged rock'n'roll, tore it apart by complicating it with messages and philosophies.



Dee Dee Ramone: a different view.

The Ramones' shows also don't reflect their current albums; instead they merely reflect CBGB's circa 1977. To add to these problems, the mix during this past concert was off a bit, making the music more distorted and blocking out some of Joey's singing. Despite my criticisms, there were 2,000 excited fans (the most devoted ones up front) who couldn't get enough of these "Pinheads". In the crowd there were a few trendy punky types but mostly they were an average-looking but enthusiastic rock audience who had for the most part seemed to have only recently become Ramones fans. This was the biggest crowd for a San An-

too. It was great working with the guy. We had real good communication going and we were involved all the way through to the actual mastering."

How did you like working with Phil Spector on *End of the Century*?

"I like Phil a lot and I still love the album no matter what anybody else thinks. It was a very controversial album in which we broke new grounds. We enjoyed having Phil on the last album but we like each album to be different; to be a new experience."

How do you think *Pleasant Dreams* is different from the rest?

"The Ramones have a very definite



Johnny Ramone on guitar

photo by Clyde Kimsey

photo by Robbin Cresswell

"Yeah, yeah. The program directors are 40 and in a sense, they don't want to lose their youth. That's why the Moody Blues are Number One again and Christopher Cross walked off with all the Grammys. It's all a set-up. We believe that if you fight it, you'll come through in the long run and that's what we're doing. We won't compromise for nobody. Radio is getting bleaker, but I believe the rock discos are the alternative. They seem to have a wider variety of music."

I said that I thought the sad fact is that most radio listeners don't know what they're missing. They figure what the radio plays is all there is.

Joey then added his comment. "They're totally shut out. The radio doesn't want them to know what's out there (in the way of new music). It may not be the kid's fault but they should find some way to re-educate themselves. (Through IORNR for starters). If enough people voice their opinions to the programmers, then things might change."

I guess people think that one person can't do too much. (Maybe that's why Reagan was elected. Ed.)

Said Joey, "Right, but one of the reasons The Ramones go on is for that very reason. It's a slow process but we're definitely getting through, though at times it's like smashing your head against a wall. We kept on pushing and now we can draw massive crowds at concerts all over the world. More radio stations seem to be playing *Pleasant Dreams*."

Is the song "This Business is Killing Me" from your latest Lp, autobiographical?

"Yes, definitely. It's been very tough for us. We came out of left field and started a

whole new sound in rock. We revolutionized it."

I asked him to explain another new song called "It's Not My Place (In the 9 to 5 World)".

"The song is about being a non-conformist and being successful. The people we list in the lyrics (Jack Nicholson, Phil Spector, Clint Eastwood, etc.) are rebels and they, like ourselves have integrity. Being a Ramone is not a 9 to 5 job. It's a 24-hour a

day world. It's a lifestyle. Creative people have no place in the 9 to 5 world."

The title of the band's latest Lp *Pleasant Dreams* fits right into what you would expect of The Ramones, black humor full of double meanings. It will surprise music fans, although devoted Ramones fans will have mixed reactions towards this album. Whatever anyone thinks of this latest Lp or any of their others, The Ramones is where responsible rock ends.—RNR



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Wishbone Ash: roots return

by
JOHN REGNIER
Freelance Writer

It's been four years since Wishbone Ash has toured the United States. But 800 hardcore grassroots fans cheered the British rock group's return to San Antonio at Randy's on July 27, in one of the most electrifying concerts of the year.

Best known for innovating the dual lead-guitar style, Wishbone Ash showed Randy's clientele what musicianship is all about. Probably the most impressive aspect of the group is watching veteran musicians who truly have a powerful command over their instruments — and the audience.

More than just technicians, however, the quartet can also perform. Unlike groups

tem.

Upton formed Wishbone Ash in 1969, along with Powell, Ted Turner and Martin Turner. The group hit the charts in England with the release of *Argus* in 1972, but has never had a huge following in the United States. Their four-year absence from this country has been due to a heavy touring schedule across the world, particularly in Europe and Japan.

Wishbone Ash has stayed very much the same in concept during the past 12 years, Upton explained, a rock band with two guitars, a bass and drums, with influences including blues, classical and country music.

He did note, however, that moving (to Connecticut, among other places), and



Wishbone Ash: still alive and well.

who have become stale or jaded over the years, Wishbone Ash seemed to very much enjoy playing their songs — smiling and interacting with the audience, even smoking joints tossed onstage to them from a generous audience.

Guitarists Andy Powell and Laurie Wisefield demonstrated incredible guitarwork from the start of the very first number, "The King Will Come." The duo interchanged guitar leads, often mirroring each other's hand movements on the frets.

Meanwhile, drummer and band leader Steve Upton pounded out a furious locomotive-paced percussion, hidden behind his massive drumset. With his thin, long blonde hair bouncing as he played, Upton was reminiscent of a serious version of the Muppets' drummer Animal.

It took a bass player with the experience of Trevor Bolder to hold his own playing with these three. Bolder, who joined Wishbone Ash only three months ago, had previously played with Uriah Heep and David Bowie's Spiders from Mars. His inspired bass playing maintained the high level of talent displayed by the entire band.

Highlighting the set was "Phoenix," a song from the *Argus* Lp. Wishbone Ash played for approximately one hour, then returned to the screaming crowd for two encores.

So it was a shame, with the technical prowess being displayed on stage, that the sound system was so bad. As has been a recent complaint of the new, revamped Randy's, the vocals were washed out and indistinguishable.

Drummer Upton summed up the night's gig, saying, "The audience was great, however, from a sound viewpoint, the facilities were not too good for us." He explained that the band omitted two songs from their performance ("Get Ready" and "Number the Brave") because the songs depend on the vocals and a good sound sys-

tem. Upton formed Wishbone Ash in 1969, along with Powell, Ted Turner and Martin Turner. The group hit the charts in England with the release of *Argus* in 1972, but has never had a huge following in the United States. Their four-year absence from this country has been due to a heavy touring schedule across the world, particularly in Europe and Japan.

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He did note, however, that moving (to Connecticut, among other places), and

changing band members has effected the group's music. "Each album reflects our changes and new influences of our environments. You could say each was a 'record' of what we were into at the time," Upton said.

Most recently, Wishbone Ash lost its original bass player, Martin Turner. Former U.K. bassist John Wetton was hired to play on the most recent Lp, *Number the Brave*. Since Wetton had other commitments, Bolder was recruited to join the band.

San Antonio was the 11th stop on a 30-city summer tour of mostly small clubs in America. Upton said he wasn't surprised at the enthusiasm of the local audience, despite the group's long absence. "With a smaller crowd, you stay in the grassroots — the people who feel strongly for you. You can feel it and see it. It's much more personal," he explained.

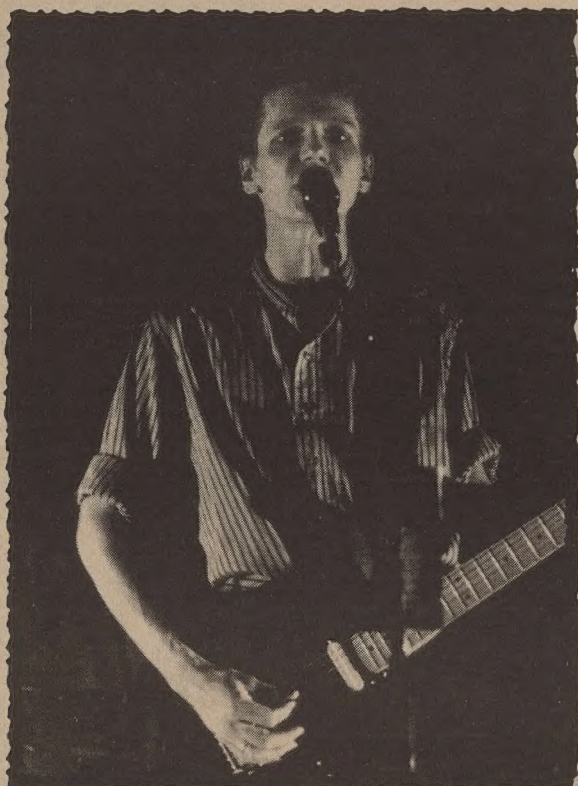
There are disadvantages, though, with playing clubs. "We hope we can pick up younger fans, but they can't get into these clubs if they're under drinking age," Upton said.

Overall, Wishbone Ash is a talented band that has managed to avoid trends, yet survive. Never a huge commercial success, the group has probably even come dangerously close to obscurity. Yet, bands that survive for 12 years do so for a reason. For Wishbone Ash it may be because they can still fire up an excellent concert.

As their song may suggest, Wishbone Ash, indeed, rose from the ashes of a four-year absence like a Phoenix — as powerful as ever. —RNR

Twilight Zone romances

There's no love inside the Icehouse



Iva Davies: I wonder what's out there. Oh, who cares?

photo by David Willis

by
DAVID ARTHUR
Editor

Picture this for your consideration. You are a conservatory trained oboe player in an orchestra. An argument with a highly placed conductor ends your career. So you form a rock group with a person you have never met before, playing an instrument you have never played before. You live in a house that may be haunted. If you are Iva Davies, you have just entered the Twilight Zone and formed; Icehouse.

Davies, a 23-year-old guitarist/singer/songwriter for the Australian group Icehouse, says of his past problems; "it was a situation where I wasn't doing anything. I had gotten into this big argument with an important conductor who was highly placed with the government — in Australia almost all orchestras are government run — and I figured my career was pretty much over. So I called up Keith Walsh (bassist) who some friends of mine knew — I had never met him — and asked him if he needed a singer — even though I had never sung before. He told me that he didn't have a band and asked if I wanted to start one.

Davies then added that "up until then, I had never played guitar. That was when I got my first one."

Davies was speaking from a Howard Johnson in Austin utilizing Ma Bell's one-plus service. Later that day, Saturday, August 15, he and the rest of the group — Welsh, Anthony Smith (keyboards) and John Lloyd (drums) — performed to nearly three thousand people in the Austin Opryhouse. Because the interview was by long distance the road manager, being Australian, had never had the services of Bell before and didn't know about one-plus dialing and wanted the interview to take place before the soundcheck, not after it or the show (something about the group resting). I did, however, attend the show in a place that was anything but an "icehouse"; both audience and un-airconditioned Opryhouse were hot. And so was the band. Tight, energetic — this is their first U.S. tour but it doesn't show. Their modern, technological sound showed up quite well. Something like a cross between Ultravox and The Cars — yet unique.

The history of the band is fairly straight-

forward. Formed six years ago and originally called Flowers — "out of spite," Davies said — the band was a two guitar, bass, and drum outfit playing covers. Davies started writing songs and added a keyboardist at about the same time and the present lineup has been together for two years.

The band released their first album *Icehouse*, early this year but when it came time for U.S. release they found that someone was already using the name Flowers. "Rather than lose the recognition we had built with our first album, we used its title as our new name," Davies said.

Davies admitted that U.S. success was important to him. "It's very important in sheer mercenary terms. But it's important to me because Australia shares strong ties with the U.S. It's hard for an Australian to be accepted in London — it's hard for Americans too — there's a colonial attitude there. We aren't as accepted over in England as we are here and that's the only reason I can see for it."

To facilitate acceptance here Davies remixed the album before its U.S. release. "We remixed the album because it was physically softer sounding than any record played on the radio," explains Davies. "Subliminally, that's really bad."

Davies noted that the ten songs on *Icehouse* are "basically the first ten songs I ever wrote. Novice songwriters tend to write themselves into their songs. Quite a few people have mentioned to me that the album seems to have a sense of alienation. It was a period I was in . . . just an accident of fate. Our new songs are quite different. We have plenty of room for change . . . we haven't written ourselves into a particular corner. I haven't a clue as how to describe our sound," Davies continued, "because we cover so much ground."

Davies then went on to explain what their single, "Icehouse," is all about. "I lived in this flat in Sydney for six or seven years. It had some very peculiar characteristics, one of them being that it was unbelievably cold. No matter what I did, I couldn't get the place warm. It became a personal mission of mine to beat this house — in the end, the house won.

"A lot of people thought I was crazy to live there. When our drummer, John Lloyd,

came in from Melbourne, he came over and as soon as he came in said "I don't like this." He never came in again even though he eventually lived maybe a hundred yards away.

"My last day in the house — I gave it up because of the tour — I was on the phone and there was a weird noise outside. The lights flickered, so I went outside and the whole fusebox was alight.

"My lights went out so I called the power company. My fusebox was burned out and there was no way to get the lights back on. It was only my flat. I had to spend my last night there with no lights," Davies said.

He then added that "after I wrote the song — I wrote it while still in the house — a girl knocked at my door. This was perhaps two weeks after I wrote the song. I had always wondered about the house across the street. The lights were on all night, every night, and the population kept changing. There were always five or six old men living there but every couple of months that would change. It had a disheveled look. I used to make up stories about what was going on over there — really weird things.

"Well, the girl recognized me from a couple of gigs she had seen," Davies explained, "and it turned out that she was a nurse and that it was a halfway house."

Davies then went on to explain some of his other songs. "Sister" is a machine-age sexual fantasy, stemming from Davies' experiences with machinery. "An electric guitarist," he said, "is at the mercy of technology. Sometimes, it's almost as if there is no logic to technology, that it does what it wants to." He then related an all too familiar story; his guitar amp will malfunction but when he takes it in to be fixed, it will work

perfectly. The song is about a malfunctioning female android, who processes just such a trait.

Davies readily admits to having messages in his songs — "Fatman", for example, is a song which compares the relationship of a gangster and his moll to the relationship between big business and consumers — but believes that messages need to be almost "subliminal" to work.

"People who try to project a message," he said, "sometimes annoy me. Rock and

"You need to produce something that most people can relate

to, but which still has a certain in-

fiction." — Iva Davies

roll is an entertainment medium after all — that's the primary motivation. You need to produce something that most people can relate to, but which still has a certain inflection."

"As soon as you start waving a flag you alienate. A minority may believe in it, but they would have anyway. You don't get anyone else — you haven't turned anyone around. You need to be less direct," he continued.

Davies was vague about the future, saying he doesn't like to plan ahead because "I can't trust myself." But the band has about a month left to tour, then they will break and may return to this area as early as late October. Just in time for winter . . . "te-do, te-do, you have entered the Twilight Zone . . ."

—RNR

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Werewolf proves metal

HEAVY METAL

Heavy Metal is a movie that lacks consistency. Consisting of episodes tied together by a little glowing green marble, the stories work well individually but fail as a whole.

Which is o.k. The movie is still entertaining — it's just that you have to ignore the little marble like you would a commercial when it appears between stories.

The stories range from intergalactic trials to robotic sex to Sam Spade in New York a couple of hundred years from now. The two most notable are "Den" a story about a young boy who becomes a giant on another planet and wins himself a girl and the final story, about an Amazon, the last of her race, who is sworn by an age old pact to defend another race. The little green marble takes over some primitives who slay the race the girl is supposed to defend. She goes out for revenge and...

It's a neat movie. The animation is not the highlight of the picture; it's the stories. They hold up well and are much more sophisticated than one might expect. But the animation loses something, especially when compared to the magazine "Heavy Metal", where the stories are all drawn from. It just doesn't have the same magic or vibrancy.

The much vaunted musical soundtrack is completely wasted also. The songs are deployed illogically, usually are drowned out by the movie itself, and when audible either detract from a scene by reinforcing the wrong elements or just make no sense at all.

The movie has value; just don't expect too much. It at least lacks the pretensions of *American Pop* and is therefore much more successful. It's not up to *Fantasia* however — but then, what animated movie is? **David Arthur

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON

After watching *An American Werewolf in London*, all the rest of the horror movies seem alike, especially all the old wolfman movies. In most horror movies, the mood is taken for granted; they are intentionally gothic and romantic instead of realism with many tones.

Not so with this movie. *An American Werewolf in London* puts to rest all previous notions of horror movies. It is down to earth and realistic which makes it more believable thus more scary. *Werewolf* could be the first "pop" horror movie.

Most people come not knowing exactly what kind of movie they are about to see, while others go to it expecting a horror spoof along the lines of *Young Frankenstein*; after all, it's advertised as being by the director of *Animal House*. The audience quickly discovers that this is a different kind of movie as the werewolf attacks its first victim. One minute the audience is nervously laughing at our heroes as they try to escape from a howling animal and a second later the werewolf pounces on one of them and a very gory and graphic slaughter erupts on the screen. To many people this scene was quite a rude awakening, but isn't that what horror movies are all about?!

The mood then changes from light drama and a little sentimentality to a tasteful love scene, to some light comedy sprinkled throughout. After his first night of "werewolfing" he wakes up naked in the zoo. As he hides behind a bush, he tricks a little boy into giving him his balloons. Our hero runs off and the little boy says to his "mummy" in a very serious voice "a naked American man stole my balloons." That's the way this movie goes. It wants to be realistic concerning the old werewolf theme without



compromising so it has many tones. These tones in the scenes make us laugh and scream that much more.

Some people might gripe about the

predictable ending in this otherwise off-beat movie, but it is a realistic one which seems to be the movie's main purpose.

**Clyde Kimsey

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The Bad and the Ugly

by
DAVID M. FROST
"Keeper of the Flame"

Even though last month's column was a "labor of love", it nonetheless consumed a large amount of time and energy. For that reason I decided to give myself a break this time and write about something straightforward and easy... like a list of the fifteen worst rock'n'roll records of all time. Duck soup, right? Well, no; it's not as easy as it might seem.

There have been a lot of stinko records in the past 25 years but the number of candidates is narrowed significantly if one uses the same rule I used for last month's list of all-time rock'n'roll greats — that is, the candidates had to have been certified hits. The problem here is that a bad record is very likely to sink like a stone, which automatically eliminates such bow-wows as "Destroy all Music" by the Wierdos and "The Bells" by the Marquis. Die-hard punk and doo-wop fans may protest, but the overwhelming weight of evidence is that both of these records fall in the same category... and are therefore ineligible for a list of the fifteen worst rock'n'roll records of all time.

Another problem is the countless number of bummers which were hits but were not rock'n'roll records. "Beep Beep." "Danke Schoen." "You Light Up My Life." Anything by Paul Anka, John Denver, Barry 'Fuckin' Manilow and any of the Osmonds.

And then there's disco. Hell, it would be ridiculously easy to make up such a list that contained nothing but disco records. Too easy. Besides, there's still the very real question of whether disco can be considered rock'n'roll in any way, shape or form. Elton John's "Philadelphia Freedom" belongs on the list but eliminating all other disco and disco-influenced records disqualifies another large group of candidates.

Finally, there's the matter of Lp cuts. This is a bigger problem with a list of bad records than with a list of good records. An Lp cut is more likely to be bad than good because Lp's by their very nature tend to attract filler material of no value and experiments which fail miserably. And they're not eligible.

So, what are we left with as we sit down to compile a list of the worst rock'n'roll records of all time? One category is records which are hopelessly inept — but, as noted earlier, such records usually didn't sell. There is, however, a goldmine of records which qualify because they are totally crass. All of Chubby Checker's records come readily to mind. They had a rock'n'roll backbeat and style and were somewhat blues-influenced but they were so badly calculated and contrived that at least one of Chubby's "hits" belongs on the list. Pat Boone's "Love Letters in the Sand" also belongs. Although it was a lame and shallow ballad, you'll hear rock'n'roll triplets from the rhythm section and a rock'n'roll sax belting out some extremely boring riffs at various points. Thus, it was a rock'n'roll record. An extremely crummy rock'n'roll record.

Then there are the records which are bombastic to the point of self-parody. I know that a whole bunch of people bought copies of "You Are So Beautiful" by Joe Cocker but, let's face it, there

wasn't an ounce of honest emotion in that record. It seemed to be sincere but I never believed it for a minute. That record, or something like it, goes on the shit-list. "Philadelphia Freedom" probably belongs in this category also.

The final criteria is wimpiness, with an amateur and professional sub-category. In the former can be found such bummers as Frankie Avalon's "De De Dinah". "Sugar Shack" by Jimmy Gilmer and the Fireballs (hard to believe that he came from the same territory as Buddy Holly and Bobby Fuller) and every record by Gary Lewis and the Playboys. The professional wimps include the purveyors of Southern California fern bar throwaways like "How Much I Feel", "Undercover Angel" and "Let Your Love Flow." (What about "Sugar Sugar" or anything by the Cowsills, Dave? — Ed.)

And if I never again hear anything by K.C. and the Sunshine Band, it'll be too soon.

I'll not make a list at this time. That's for you to do whenever you're in the mood. A couple of beers will help you get started. You can have a lot of fun with a list like that. It's also useful to have a reference point to make the good stand out from the not-so-good.

And it never hurts to consider, once in awhile, the essence of rock'n'roll. I know, rock'n'roll is largely visceral and you shouldn't have to think about it too much, if at all. But you gotta stay in shape, keep your senses sharp, sometimes validate your instincts with beliefs or facts (we're only human after all) and otherwise not fall prey to false prophets (and profits) who would try to trick you into accepting less than the genuine article... which is good rock'n'roll.

You may or may not hear from me next month, as I'm way behind schedule in fixing up an old house I recently bought. Here's something to look forward to, though: for whatever reason, the folks at the Rock Around the Clock Record Shop have decided to put on another record collectors' convention! It will be sometime next February, so start saving your money now. It should be a good one.

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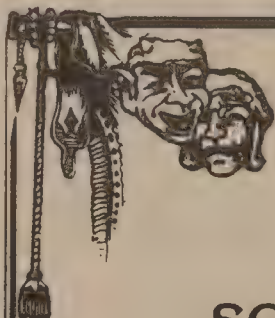
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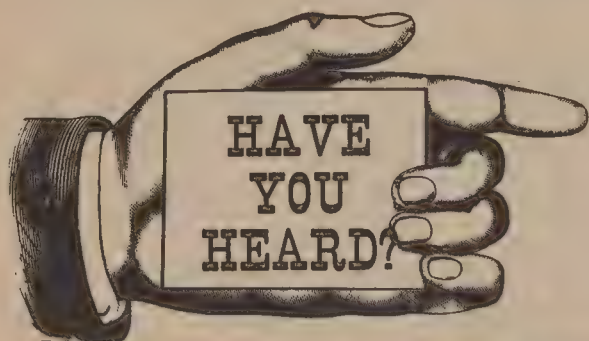
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Have You Heard? is a new column which we are starting this month. It contains short newsclips of local and national interest. The staff will contribute things that they've heard about, but sometimes our only sources are you; so if you know of any current music news, let us know about it; call 732-8347 and leave a message, or write! (P.O. Box 5629 San Antonio, TX 78201).

Since last issue, Jerry Lee Lewis has made considerable progress in recovering from his perforated stomach that forced him into the hospital in late June. For a week after the operation, the doctors gave him a fifty-fifty chance of living. After finally regaining consciousness "The Killer" said "You haven't been out spending my money, have you" to his wife and asked her to smuggle some drugs in for him...

IORNR's local scene editor, Jim Beal cut off his ponytail... There should be a U.S. Rolling Stones tour this fall... Austin's rockabilly/fundamentalist rock'n'rollers, The Leroi Bros. are expected to play several San Antonio shows this fall. Catch them while they're still out of the arenas... A rock'n'roll trivia quiz show is scheduled for the television networks this fall...

There will be a rock show on September 4th from six p.m. to midnight in Juarez Plaza in La Villita. The bands are: from San Antonio, The Rejects and The Dick Clark Five; from Austin will be The Big Boys and Skeptiks; The Sluts from New Orleans, and The Hates from Houston. All ticket sales (\$2.00) will go to help fight Muscular Dystrophy...

Former Cream drummer Ginger Baker is Public Images' new drummer. Who said punks hate hippies?... Rudy Harst recently married his longtime girlfriend Suzette Baer... In case you don't know; Channel 4 has a syndicated program on Sundays at 10:30 p.m. called *The Blue Jean Network*. It consists of concert segments and interviews with one or two rock and comedy acts...

Linda Ronstadt's new record will feature covers of jazz songs made in the forties by Billy Holliday, Sarah Vaughn, and Ella Fitzgerald... Pauline Black has quit The Selector... Look for a new release by Gary Davenport and Charlie Athanas on Closet Records... Denny Laine has quit The Wings trio, making it just Paul and Linda once more... Rumor has it that former frontman for Creedence Clearwater Revival, John Fogerty, is working on a second solo album. His last one was in 1975...

September the 7th will make Claude Morgan and The Blast's first anniversary. They will be playing every Sunday in September with a guest band at Villa Fontana in HemisFair Plaza... The Clash will appear in the next Robert De Niro movie; *King of Comedy*...

Good news for local blues fans... The Hurricanes have reformed... Crosby, Stills, and Nash are due for still



Claude Morgan is having an anniversary. It's a gonna be a big blast!

another album out this fall... The Mickey Free Band is finally ready to rock'n'roll again. Catch them at Trucker's General Store most Saturdays... Former Aerosmith guitarist, Brad Whitford, has formed his own band with former Ted Nugent vocalist, Derek St. Holmes... Let's hear it for competition! We now have Randy's, The Rock Saloon, and Daddy's to bring us mid-size talent.

Eivis Costello's new album, *Almost Blue* will be traditional songs by artists such as Hank Williams, Johnny Cash, George Jones, Charlie Rich, and Don Gibson. It'll be out in October... Dogman and the Shepards have reformed as a trio. They are now Neal Walden on guitar and vocals, Brian Walden on bass, and Rene Lopez on drums; formerly with Off The Charts...

We appreciate our distributors very much, but since *IORNR* is free, nothing makes us angrier than to have a store try to sell us. We have caught one doing just that. We hope this was just an isolated incident, but if a distributor tries to sell this magazine to you, let us know.

Reward of \$500.00 cash for the return of: one Crown DC-300A amp and two JBL 4602 Stage Monitor speakers stolen on night of August 10. Call 824-8781 day; and 826-7573 night — Dale or John...

Willie Nelson was rushed to the hospital on August 18 due to a collapsed lung... Ron Young, publisher of *IORNR*, is now writing for the San Antonio Light. Watch for his articles daily... The Brave Combo will return to the Arneson River Theater September 8th, Jim Beal will host...

Yes has disbanded. Bassist Chris Squire and drummer Alan White have joined with ex-Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page and vocalist Robert Plant to form The XYZ Band. Yes guitarist Steve Howe and keyboardist Geoff Downes have formed a new band, Asia, with John Wetton (King Crimson, UK) and Carl Palmer (Emerson, Lake and Palmer.)**Clyde Kimsey

New band, new name

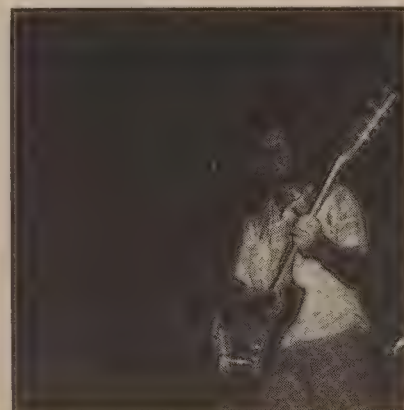
What do you call a band that keeps changing its name? So far this quartet has been labeled the Dick Clark Five and the Butthole Surfers. Tomorrow, who knows?

Scott Matthews, Scott Stevens, Paul Walthall and Dez Moines make up one of the most different bands San Antonio has seen. All members are Trinity University grads and while they have no set name for their band — Dez Moines says they're unsure as to their direction and do not "want to limit" themselves — their sound is all their own.

Each of the band members trade off on instruments; drums, guitar, bass and sax — Matthews is usually on drums, Stevens on bass, Walthall on guitar and Moines on vocals. Walthall also sings. I saw them last month at Duke's Royal Coach Inn in Austin.

Moines says their music isn't necessarily about anything "We don't like to write songs about specific things," he explained. The band has been together for only some three months and is influenced by groups most people have never heard or heard of: Killing Joke, SPK, Public Image, The Germs.

Now for the review: different, but it seems to me to be different just for the sake of being different. Their music seems just as calculated as say, Journey, but from a contrapositive view. The band is just as selfconscious of musical form as studio musicians but rather than worrying about following the rules, they worry about breaking them. But before you set out to break the rules, don't you need to know what they are?



Walthall sings about name changes

Also, their music is disturbingly cynical and the lyrical imagery seems full of gratuitous violence. There's a high level of pretense here — claims about being the most interesting band in S.A. — but they just can't back them up.

However, the band is still inchoate and has some promise. They show a lot of guts in just getting up and playing and while I may never be a fan of the group, there's no question that as they play more they should be more effective.

The band lacks a strong rhythm section — bass and drums were often hesitant and the drums seemed out of synch — but the sax playing was good. Walthall's guitar work was also good.

The group has been having problems arranging gigs in S.A. Moines says that the band will "play for beer."

**David Arthur

Daddy's: a new alternative

Daddy's, S.A.'s new "in-place" opened last month with shows by Kim Carnes and Rick Springfield.

A venture of Rod Krohn and Ray Glau, Daddy's is located in the Northwest Center on Fredericksburg Road, where once a supermarket resided.

The plan is to have Daddy's open 7 nights a week, explained Glau, with musical stars on the weekend, Las Vegas personalities on Sundays and Mondays and local entertainers and musicians on the other days.

There is also a children's matinee on

Saturdays for teens under the age of 18. Daddy's serves alcoholic beverages so they aren't allowed in at the regular shows.

Upcoming attractions include: Tanya Tucker, the Manhattan Transfer, Juice Newton, Beach Boy Carl Wilson, and Pat Benatar.

The two owners have already spent \$2 million on Daddy's, which will seat 2,000. The place has a large dance floor and an incredible sound system. The lights are run by Chip Bulloch who uses to run the lights at Studio 54.—RNR

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New dreams?



Ramones/Pleasant Dreams

(Sire)

★★★★½

Like the last two Ramones albums, *Pleasant Dreams* is very different from the first three which set their foundation. If you want powerful jackhammer rock'n'roll then listen to the first three, but this is 1981 and The Ramones can't play sixty variations on "Cretin Hop" all their lives. After all, The Ramones never pretended to be rock pioneers; they just wanted to play traditional rock'n'roll the way they happen to interpret it.

Probably the best songs are the ones that are most different from previous Ramones material. New songs like "She's A Sensation," "We Want The Airwaves" (or else!), and "It's Not My Place" are great rock'n'roll songs for The Ramones — or any band.

In other songs, The Ramones seem to be covering the same ground until you listen further. Songs like "You Didn't Mean Anything To Me," "Don't Go" and the autobiographical "This Business Is Killing Me" partly save themselves from being stereotypical by a little lead guitar, clever use of harmonies, and some keyboards. On the other hand, songs like "Sitting In My Room" and "You Sound Like You're Sick" are needless and redundant.

★★★★ — Excellent.
A "must" album.

★★★★ — Very good.
Worth a chance.

★★★ — Good.
A solid effort.



★★ — Poor.
Inconsistent or just lacking in some way.

★ — Mediocre.
Waste of time.

○ Frisbee.
The only thing it's good for.

This album is comprised of inspired new material with a broader base without selling out and a couple of "cliche" songs. It's not a perfect album; they could have been more radical in their new approach instead of going halfway. I've always realized a potential in this group that I haven't quite heard.

As a whole, *Pleasant Dreams* may disappoint some punk purists, but the genuine Ramones fans should enjoy at least half the songs while other first-timers might enjoy the entire album. **Clyde Kimsey

Joe Jackson/Jumpin' Jive

(A&M)

★★★★★

Linda Ronstadt will soon release her version of thirties torch songs a la Willie Nelson. So what, right? Elvis Costello will eventually release that album's worth of classic country tunes he recently recorded in Nashville. But big deal. We all knew he would do it eventually, right? But no one I'll bet would have expected this nifty collection of '40s jump and swing tunes from the likes of Joe "Is She Really Goin' Out With Him" Jackson. What's even more amazing is that this strange brew is excellent by anyone's standards.

With each album he's released Joe's managed to break new musical ground by keeping his deck shuffled. From his first angst-ridden pop LP, *Look Sharp!*, that had the critics comparing him unfairly to Elvis "the C", to his second more serious diatribe

about the star system, *I'm The Man*, to last year's rhythmic surprise, *Beat Crazy*, he's kept critics and fans guessing. But by doing so he's also unintentionally alienated many of his original fans by throwing formula to the winds, unlike Elvis who has been more fortunate with his chameleon changes.

On his latest undertaking Joe has decided to opt for such a different style that he's disbanded his old group (except for bassist Graham Maby) and what he's come up with will probably again discourage too many of his old fans. But if the right radio stations play the album I'm positive he can win over a new audience, including those older members of society who were weaned on Glenn Miller and Cab Calloway, as well as the folks who buy Manhattan Transfer's vocal jive.

Joltin' Joe has chosen some fine musical chestnuts such as the humorous Louis Jordan numbers "You Run Your Mouth (And I'll Run My Business)" and "Jack You Dead", to Calloway's weepy melodramatic "San Francisco Fan", a randy version of Jordan's "You're My Meat", as well as a fine reading of Miller's "Tuxedo Junction."

He's backed by some fine musicians who not only can play this period music but who also understand and enjoy it. And while they play the tunes at a faster-paced modern tempo, they deliver the songs with ease, excitement and sincerity.

While an ensemble like *Asleep At The*

Wheel can perform tunes by Louis Jordan (by whom this album was inspired) like "Choo Choo Cha Boogie", albeit more in the style of Bob Wills' country swing band, letter perfect their renditions aren't as challenging as when someone from out of left field like Jackson does them.

Indeed he's put his rock'n'roll career on the line somewhat with this offering. I can hear the A&M execs now. "Forties stuff?! But you're not Ronstadt."

Out of boredom with the current pop scene, Joe Jackson has gone back forty years and returned with an album that will surprise many with just how good a singer and arranger he is. No other so-called rock singer save Van Morrison could sing these staccato, scat-enhanced tunes with the class he does. He also plays some nice vibes on this piece of hot wax. As the liner notes state: Reap this righteous riff. **Ron Young

The Silencers/Romantic

(CBS)

Frisbee ○

The second album follow-up to last year's excellent debut isn't much good except when they try their hand at reggae-rock like "Cry Tough". Have a frisbee. **Ron Young

Off Broadway/Quick Turns

(Atlantic)

★

This, their second album, is better than the one before, but it still offers nothing you haven't heard before. Sure, they've got a tight little group, fine guitarwork, and a strong vocalist. They just don't have anything to say. They're sort of a recycled Cheap Trick.

**Ron Young

American Flamingo



Crack The Sky/Photoflamingo

(Lifesong)

★★★★½

Crack The Sky was virtually the only interesting non-new wave American band to spring up during the late 70s, but due to the smokescreen generated by that movement they didn't get half the attention they deserved. And when the smoke cleared, CTS had disappeared.

Well, they reemerged last year with *White Music*, an LP which also marked the return of original lead singer/guitarist/songwriter John Palumbo. Palumbo must be the most underrated songwriter on this planet because no one's ever rated him, and his potential is... staggering? Nice word... hmmm, I guess it'll

have to do.

Despite his anglopop roots, Palumbo is a thoroughly American songwriter, able to reconcile the two co-conflicting aims of most American songwriters — the vaudevillian desire for schmaltzy entertainment and the artistic need to say something. His are not the urban visions of Springsteen or the emotional innervations of Jackson Browne — though at times he captures some of their feeling. No, this is a songwriter for middle class America, in a way a Dylan could never be — he doesn't hate or spitefully mock the people he writes about. Palumbo manages to transcend his mundane roots with humor and insight. I mean, let's face it, how many of us have ever driven a stolen car, a la Springsteen. I thought so. And we can't all live in California.

All of this brings us to *Photoflamingo*, CTS' seventh album. The album is an attempt by Palumbo to combine the sophistication of the first two CTS LPs with the fierce attack that he developed on *White Music* and the funk he displayed on his solo album, *Innocent By-stander*.

The album is unrelenting. Palumbo is the only original CTS member left but the trademarks are still there: the witty lyrics, sinuous guitar leads, intricate arrangements. The music is full of subtle touches that you barely

catch — even as it hits you like a tackle for the Dallas Cowboys. There's even — gasp, I don't believe it... a mellotron!

Palumbo has his pretensions but his humor pulls him through. Proof? Well, how about "Only Lonely" where the protagonist realizes he's lonely cause he's "memorized the whole TV" or "With The Morons", a touching ditty about wanting to be like everyone else. And considering Palumbo's dedication and lack of luck, it's an understandable emotion: "Ah, life with the morons/Ah, HO HO HO/Living is easy when you're slow."

There are genuine moments of terror here, too. "Is All We Know" offers a stark and chilling portrait of idols and heroes: "I've seen good men, I've believed in them so/But when the heat came the good men burned away." And "The Other Guy", which succeeds on the strength of Palumbo's vocals. The anger, the frustration, the disbelief reveal themselves layer by layer — it's exceptional.

But "Photoflamingo" is the real winner. It has a haunting melody and lyrics that really hit home: "Here come the Color Men they're trying to fool me again/Show me their video and ask me to pretend/It's better than the real thing."

Look, enough examination. I wanna go turn the LP over and play it again. **David Arthur



Pat Metheny & Lyle Mays/ As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls

(ECM)

★★★★★

A haunting album, Metheny is not working within a given context here — this is not fusion, nor out and out jazz, or rock. The closest analogy I can think of is Brian Eno — side one is definitely ambient — the title track — is the most impressive piece of music Metheny's done and side two is reminiscent of his work but superior.

The guitar playing is, of course, superb — Metheny is at last enlarging his style and Lyle Mays' keyboards are airy and bright, giving Metheny plenty of room in which to work. Much better than Metheny's last LP, *1981*, and probably his best, period. **David Arthur

Vinyl Habits... Vinyl Habits... Vinyl Habits... Vinyl Habits... Vinyl Habits... Vinyl Habits... Vinyl Habits... Vinyl Habits

Metro/America In My Head (EP) (Polydor Import) ★★★★★½

Since the departure of Duncan Browne, many people felt that Metro was all washed up. Well, this new EP is a statement that they aren't. In fact, it's very much a return to their first classic Lp simply entitled *Metro*. *America in My Head* is vintage Metro and one tends to wonder if Duncan Browne isn't on this somewhere.

"Alone" is somewhat of a different twist but the chorus brings back the true Metro spirit which in my opinion cannot be compared to anyone else except for you know who. Peter Godwin's vocals still have that haunting, piercing chill and Sean Lyons' guitar work has all the creative smoothness that we are accustomed to from Mr. Browne.

Yes there is life beyond Duncan Browne, and Metro is back to let you know of it.

**Kilburn Towers

Wah!Nah=Poo—The Art of Bluff (Eternal) ★★★★★

1981 has been a year for brilliant debut al-

bums such as Clock DVA's *Thirst*, Fire Engines' *Lubricate Your Living Room*, and the Au Pairs surprising *Playing With a Different Sex*. Along comes Wah! with perhaps the best of the lot. The last of the Crucial Three to put out an album, Pete Wylie may have surpassed Ian McCullough of Echo and the Bunnymen, and Julian Cope of Teardrop Explodes' first effort.

Wah!'s music could be compared with that of Echo and the Bunnymen, but slightly funkier, thanks to bass player Washington. It's also a little more abstract as a result of Wylie's wild guitar playing, especially on side one's closer "Somesay."

With it's majestic bass line, highly emotional lyrics, and guitar solos recalling Lou Reed's "I Hear Her Call My Name", "Somesay" is a stunner. Words don't do it justice. Other highlights include the opening track "The Wind Up" with it's jungle rhythms, and Wylie wailing in the background "Waaah!"; and "Seven Minutes to Midnight", their second classic single in a slightly faster ver-

sion.

As the Lp's final cut, "The Death of Wah!" begins fading, Wylie sings a few lines from the theme song from the film *Midnight Cowboy*. But everybody's not talking at you, Pete; they're talking about you and your album; one of the best of 1981." Jeff Webb

The Moody Blues/Long Distance Voyager (Threshold) ★★★★★½

Michael Pinder went to court to keep the Moody Blues name off this album. Pinder left the group, you see, and he felt that without him the Moody Blues aren't. The rest of the group (with the addition of Patrick Moraz on keyboards) have the name and a good album.

Long Distance Voyager might easily have turned into a disjointed array of songs thrown together onto an album, due to the group's three year separation since the release of *Octave*. And it almost did. Each of the members' songs is distinctly different from the other's, but that "Moody Blues mood" faithfully undercurrents throughout the tracks.

Two songs in particular are worth noting:



"Painted Smile" and "22,000 Days". The former (by Ray Thomas) merely because it is reminiscent of Eric Idle singing "Bright Side", and the latter (Graeme Edge) due to its gnawing albeit somewhat gloomy overtones.

John Lodge and Justin Hayward also turn in strong efforts as usual, although not necessarily when working in collaboration. Overall, a few weak points keep *Voyager* from surpassing such past albums as *Question of Balance* and *Seventh Sojourn*.

Oh yeah, the album cover is nice; I like the artist's use of the color blue." John Duschatko

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photo by Clyde Kimsey

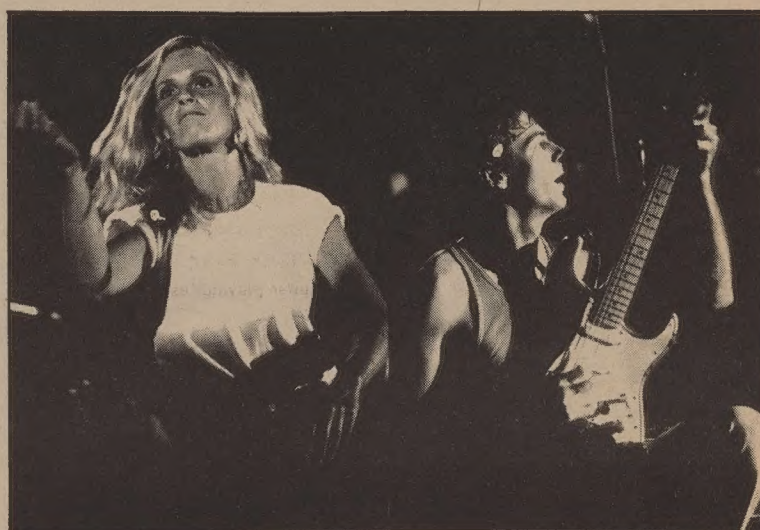


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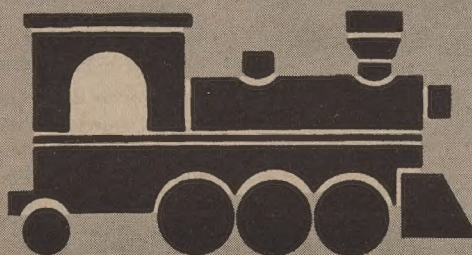
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107 TERRELL PLAZA 824-3857